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Relief from accidental Death:

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SUMMARY INSTRUCTIONS

For the general Institution, proposed in the Year 1773,

By ALEXANDER JOHNSON, M. D.

TO INTRODUCE AND ESTABLISH

In all the Extent of His Majesty's British
Dominions,

A successful Practice

For recovering Persons who meet with
Accidents, producing suddenly

AN APPEARANCE OF DEATH.

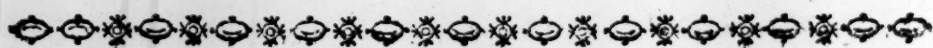
Re-published in 1784, at the Expence of the
MAIDSTONE SOCIETY.

MAIDSTONE:

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THE following Instructions for the Recovery of Persons who meet with Accidents, producing the Appearance of sudden Death, were drawn up by Dr. ALEXANDER JOHNSON, Member of the Maidstone Society, who first introduced the Practice into this Kingdom, and with great Assiduity and Expence spread the Knowledge and Rules of the successful Treatment. In this Re-publication are so many Additions to his former Proposals, that it may be deemed a new Performance, and it is (by the Doctor's Permission) ordered to be printed by the said Society.



OBSERVATIONS.

THE first humane attempts to recover persons that were but apparently dead, having been made upon drowned subjects, and been attended with success; the treatment that produced so happy an effect was published; and as it came to be believed, from experience, that drowned men could be brought to life again, much good ensued from promoting the practice. But although it soon became evident, that, other accidents which produce the same appearance, such as hanging, strangling, suffocating, were also remediable by a treatment nearly similar; and the mode of that treatment being likewise made known, in addition to that of the drowned subjects; it did not follow, as was expected, that, the latter discovery made as much impression as the former; and thence the extension of those benefits has not been sufficiently produced; perhaps because the latter ac-

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cidents

cidents happening within doors, do not so frequently come to the knowledge of the public. Nevertheless as experience repeatedly proves, that relief can be administered in such cases; it is highly requisite to inform and exhort all men to remember, that of those accidents of the latter description, as many subjects may be recalled to life, as of the drowned; nay more, those casualties taken together being more numerous. And the better to enable persons humanely disposed to display their compassionate feelings towards their distressed fellow-creatures, the necessary instructions are here again published in a manner distinctly applicable to the different occurrences.

In the occasional use of the following directions generally adapted to a variety of casualties and cases, attention is to be had, to choose and put in practice, such only as suit the circumstances of situation and accommodation at or near the spot where the accident happens. Many recoveries having been obtained in the most inconvenient situations, the hope of success cannot but encourage those who meet with opportunities of rendering those essential services to individuals and to the community, to exert themselves, and excite others by their example, to merit the commendation of all humane and generous minded men.

Those who have compassionate feelings for the misfortunes of their fellow-creatures, will more readily be induced to attempt the rendering of good offices, when they are informed

informed that incontestible facts prove it to be in the power of every one to give that aid, which in the moment of distress, may tend to rescue a life, that without their assistance would be lost. The effectual service is to be rendered at the instant, by the person who first discovers the unfortunate sufferer, and who can more successfully exert himself in an immediate attempt for relief, than hazardously to run in quest of some person supposed to be possessed of more ability than himself, while at that very instant he loses the only moment in which he might be lucky enough to kindle up to a blaze that spark of life then yet latent, by gentle means sufficient to interrupt the state of rest in which the body then was, and tending to keep fluid, the blood that otherwise would congeal in the vessels during that rest. The great probability of being blessed with success, renders the attempt of such humane endeavours, a duty owing by every individual to another in particular, and to society at large.—Those therefore, who neglect or decline giving such aid, will not only be considered deficient in an essential point of humanity, but in some measure as accessory to the patient's death, by allowing the last spark of his life to extinguish: a reproach which no man can, upon the least reflection, allow to be laid to his charge; even under the prejudice that none but *medical men* can administer relief in such critical situations, as it is a sad apology for the loss of a life, that the *medical assistant* came too late.

After this serious exhortation to individuals for their immediate assistance to save fleeting lives; an earnest representation may with equal propriety be made to certain collective bodies, to induce them to grant an aid of the most efficacious kind, that hitherto has not been given to this beneficent institution. Parish work-houses are by their nature receptacles for relief to sufferers: they are in general conveniently disposed, and commonly provided with useful hands and materials. When any accident of the kind, hereafter described, happens out of doors, in or near a town that has a parish work-house, every person on the spot will be ready to make application to it for the reception of the casual sufferer; and as it may happen, from a want of power in the keeper, that an absolute refusal of admission be given; it is hoped and ardently wished, that those houses, by concurrent resolutions, will be declared open for the immediate and constant reception of such unfortunate objects, in order to let the country around feel the salutary effects of this beneficial practice. A measure so humane will reflect honour upon the directors who bring it to bear; while the small expence attending the event, or the purchase of a few implements necessary for particular operations, may easily be raised among the wealthy and charitable parishioners.

INSTRUCTIONS

I N S T R U C T I O N S

For the Practice of recovering Persons who appear suddenly to die, from various Accidents and Causes.

I.

D R O W N I N G.

AS soon as the drowned body is found, it must carefully be conveyed, extended upon a hand-barrow, a ladder, or some long board, to a barn, a shed, or other place under cover, where no house is near enough for its reception. It must there be laid out upon a table, a broad board, or a bench, in a sloping position, the head higher than the feet; it is then to be stripped, laid in a blanket, or horse-cloth, and carefully examined, to see whether any part be hurt; as such parts that have received injury, must be spared, and the treatment in regard to them be conducted with tenderness and caution.

The bodies of drowned persons, generally found wet, cold, and stiff, must immediately be well dried, placed in a temperate air, and rubbed with dry and warm flannels, with other cloths, or a flesh-brush. If dry rubbing does not soon prove efficacious, then some spirits are to be sprinkled upon the rub-

bers; the spirits thus used are *volatile spirit of sal ammoniac*, hartshorn, or eau-de-luce, mixed with brandy, rum, or malt spirits. The parts to be rubbed with steadiness, are the backbone, the sides, belly, and breast, the palms of the hands, and soles of the feet; other parts to be chafed with the above-named spirits, are the temples, ears, and neck.

The mouth and nose of drowned persons are often filled with mud or froth, that must be cleared away with a goose-feather, or by repeated injections of some luke-warm water, tea, or aromatic infusion; the body being laid upon its side, that the liquid may easily run out: there is no need to wrench the jaws asunder with violence when they seem close fixed, as the lips and cheeks offer room enough for introducing the fluid.

If a small degree of heat be obtained from rubbing alone, a recovery becomes very promising, and the body ought then to be laid in a bed (where it can be had) in a blanket, between two healthy persons, undressed, who are to continue rubbing, and gently agitating it, to encrease the heat to a natural state.—But if the first degree of heat be not produced from diligent rubbing, then dry heat is to be applied, in bed if possible, by stone bottles filled with hot water, and wrapped up in flannel; heated tiles or bricks, so wrapped up, but used with precaution; also hot sand in bags, laid near, but not to touch, the sides, the hands, and feet; a number of cloths alternately

alternately heated, put especially about the head, the neck, and the coldest parts of the body, and renewed as they cool, will likewise prove of service.

To the foregoing outward applications is next to be added the introduction of stimulant vapours and substances into the body, after the blowing in of common air has been tried, which alone sometimes proves efficacious. It is done with a small new pair of bellows, put up the fundament; the operation must be cautiously and slowly conducted, and while the bellows play, the volatile spirit, or caude-luce above described, put into a warm tea-cup to make it rise, is to be held under the valve.

The more stimulant vapour to be blown ~~up~~ when common air does not suffice, is the smoke of tobacco for strong bodies, or of some aromatic herb, as sage, mint, or rosemary, for the weaker sort; it is done by bellows, called fumigators; but where these are not at hand, it can be done with a common smoking pipe filled and lighted, of which the small end is put into the fundament; and the bowl being covered with a piece of paper, having pin-holes in it, or in its stead, another pipe inverted on it, will serve as a conveyer of the smoke; the same effect has been obtained by inserting a wooden clyster-pipe, or a leather sheath, of which the point was cut off; both these being fit to receive the small end of the pipe, or the nozel of a pair of bellows, without hurting the part into which they are introduced.

It has frequently been tried, and thought of use, to blow air into the mouth from time to time: when that means is attempted, it ought to be done with a small clean pair of bellows, and not with the mouth, because the breath being hot, and not pure, is improper, and would rather be hurtful than serviceable.

While air, vapour, or smoke, is introducing into the body, the belly must be gently moved and pressed upward with the hand; and the operation must be repeated and continued during several hours, until signs of life do appear. And when those are obtained, attention is then required, to go on slowly, and to give heat and motion by degrees; but not to overpower by hasty endeavours, a body then in so weak a condition as to be hurt by every inconsiderate attempt. It should at that time be kept in gentle agitation, by means of the blanket upon which it lies. The nostrils and throat are to be tickled with a crow feather; and powders or salts that provoke sneezing may then be used. The temples, ears, and neck, are to be chafed with the volatile spirits above-mentioned, mixed with brandy, or common spirits; some *tincture of castor*, or peppermint water, or some cordial, ought then to be put into the mouth, by slow degrees, a tea spoonful at a time, and allowed to go down before another be given.

The signs of returning life generally obtained, are as follows: small contractions of the muscles of the face, or other parts of the body: a slight red colour appearing on the lips

lips and cheeks; some faint and irregular pulsation in the blood vessels; a kinder feel of the flesh; and a little glow of warmth spreading over the parts. Those are followed by greater degrees of the same symptoms, by some spasms, which are succeeded by a visible distressing anxiety; a puking and purging, a groaning, and a violent head ache, of which they complain as soon as they recover speech.

No time can be limited for the continuance of the necessary treatment; it must be persevered in, without discouragement, till life be recovered; or till it plainly appear from a very long train of fruitless endeavours, that no kind of change is obtained.—The space of six hours or more, has assiduously been employed to obtain the first signs of life, which have been followed by a happy recovery, that has largely rewarded the trouble, and afforded the unspeakable satisfaction of having rescued from the grave, subjects valuable to their families and friends, or to the community.

The conduct to be held with newly recovered persons, is to keep them quiet; moderately warm; to give them sage and balm tea, and when they incline to sleep, to make them drink wine whey.—As soon as they can take food, then to strengthen them with nourishing things, such as eggs mulled with beer or wine and spices, and toasted bread without butter.

The most dangerous and irremediable consequences of doing what is wrong under critical situations, renders it essentially necessary to warn

warn accidental operators against several practices introduced by prejudice, or followed from a want of knowledge of the nature of the subject. A body in which life is suspended, is in a thorough state of weakness, and whatever is attempted towards a recovery must be gentle in proportion, for all rough and forcible means will confirm the degree of weakness, by destroying totally that latent quality with the loss of which all hopes of success vanishes.

An opinion generally prevalent, that drowned bodies contain a quantity of water in the stomach and lungs, is erroneous: what may be there, need not be forced out; and therefore recourse should not be had to the cruel attempt of rolling the body on a cask, of holding or hanging it up by the feet, or otherwise straining and bruising it. Such usage prevents recovery, brings on discharges of blood, and hastens death.

In the action of rubbing, nothing so sharp as dry salt, nettles, or other things injurious to the skin should be used, they are hurtful, and offer a barbarous way of flaying the body.

In any operation about the mouth, to clean it from mud, to inject liquids into it, or to blow in air, the jaws must not be wrenched open, the thing can, by contrivance, be done without it, and if success attends the endeavours, they will open of themselves.

As the success expected from a mild treatment, depends upon the degree of springiness and irritability still remaining in the delicate constituent parts of the body; attention must be had, not to use means of a relaxing kind, such as baths, either warm or of vapour; the application of warm water in bladders; the immersion into brewer's grains, or other warm and moist applications; all which destroy the powers upon which motion depends.

Bleeding stands prominent among the means that are not to be used; it lessens those powers, and while it is still inconsiderately or fancifully practised, assurance must be given, from experience and printed authority, that it is of hurtful tendency, obstructs the most salutary operations, and ought never on any account to be practised in cases of violent death.

Vinegar and other sour things, but too commonly used, have an effect contrary to what is expected from them; they harden the parts to insensibility, and augment the disposition in bodies at dead rest, to congeal the blood, while those called *alcalies* (of the pearl-ash kind) have a contrary and good effect.

II.

HANGING *and* STRANGLING.

THESE differ from drowning only in two circumstances; the first is, that the body is not found wet, or often chilled; and

and the second, that it is generally met with before it is quite stiff. The treatment, therefore, can only differ in those two respects, the cause of suspension of life being the same, namely, a stoppage of breath, and consequent suppression of circulation.

When such subjects have been found before a length of rest has congealed the blood, made the body stiff, and deprived it of all feeling; success has attended the use of the means already pointed out; and they are therefore recommended to be followed, with the precaution of not letting the patients remain in a state of dying rest.

III.

SUFFOCATING *and* STIFLING.

THESE accidents, somewhat of a different nature from those above-mentioned, proceed commonly from breathing noxious vapours, stagnated and foul air, unfit for respiration, and that stop the play of the lungs. The same effect arises from sulphurous exhalations, the fumes of arsenic and bituminous fuel. From air pent up in vaults and cellars, wells, and other places under ground; especially from those where dead bodies are deposited.

Such

Such casualties have been treated like the former, and always without artificial heat, when the patient was not chilled. And in addition to the means already set forth, after the first symptoms of life were discovered, and recovery came on slowly, it has proved efficient to plunge the body repeatedly into cold water, or else to throw cold water upon it in small quantities at a time, but by assiduous repetition for a length of time, in the sloping position above described, as an erect posture would be dangerous, the lifeless parts depressing and hurting each other.

IV.

THE EFFECT OF EXCESSIVE
COLD.

WHEN the whole body is seized with intense cold, or all over frozen, it is seldom successfully treated; but when it is only partially so, or locally, then the treatment that affords a cure, is the application of the coldest water, of snow, or of pounded ice, to the affected part, repeatedly, till a glow be obtained, after which the patient should be allowed quietly to recover. Elasticity can thus be restored, and heat produced gradually, while the raising of a greater degree (of heat) by other means, would destroy the principle of life, and bring on a state of mortification.

V. STROKES

V.

STROKES *of* LIGHTNING.

THESSE strokes are generally followed by absolute death, leaving the body in a wholly relaxed state. When they happen to be less violent, or only partially affecting, leaving cause to think, that life is but suspended, then some of the above stimulating means used in a free circulation of air, may prove efficacious.

VI.

Casualties proceeding from INTERNAL CAUSES ; such as

APOPLEXIES, LETHARGIES, SWOONINGS,	 	CONVULSIONS, HYSTERIC FITS, OVERLAYING,
EFFECTS OF VIOLENT PASSIONS,		
———— OF SURFEITS.		
———— OF COLD LIQUOR IN HEATS.		

ALL those accidents are, without loss of time, to be treated with rubbing and stimulating means, and in a temperate, but not hot air. The volatile spirits and salts are here essentially requisite ; and of the cordials recommended, the *tincture of castor* will be found most efficacious.

SURFEIT

SURFEITS are relieved by emetics: the easiest and speediest in operating, is made with five or six grains of *tartar emetic*, dissolved in half a pint of soft water, throwing away the settlement. After the stomach is sufficiently cleared, the reviving means prescribed for recoveries, will become effectual.

The accidents happening within doors, can be more easily and conveniently treated; and other means, not applicable without doors, may be tried; such as *electricity*, and the introduction of *dephlogisticated air*, and application of other late discoveries, of which nothing more need be said, in general instructions like these. But in all treatment of accidents that happen in a close room, the patient must be moved into a pure and cool air, the application of heat being then improper; yet care must be had not to leave the body to become cold, as that state would be as hurtful, as an over degree of heat.

To treat children expiring in *convulsive fits*, in *swoonings*, and upon discovery of their being *overlaid*, gentle and constant rubbing, moving about in a blanket, chafing the temples with spirits, holding volatile salts to the nose, and giving a few drops of hartshorn spirits in water, prove often sufficient to recover them. Such trials should always be made, as many can be brought back from those states of apparent death.

Where somewhat mildly stimulant is wanted for tender skins, the spirit of hartshorn, or the

the volatile spirit of sal ammoniac, mixed with some fine olive oil, makes a soppy ointment remarkably efficient, not only for rubbing, but for applications to a variety of sore places.

A proper attention to these plain rules, especially to that of not allowing the patient to remain in a state of rest, which makes all tardy attempts become useless, will in all probability save a number of lives that are in danger of being lost without aid: and will likewise determine doubtful situations in families, when bedridden patients appear to die: the nurses or other attendants, should immediately try some of the above directed means, and continue them for a length of time; as by such prudent precautions they would no more be liable to the reproach of having anticipated the period of death, by drawing away the pillows from under the head, or laying out the body, while a spark of life remained in it.—A further cause of great anxiety and apprehension, would also be removed by such precautions, that of confining persons to a coffin, and committing them to a grave before they be most *undoubtedly* dead.

These instructions being intended for the use of persons who have not studied the subject, and may be unacquainted with physical matters; are composed in the plainest language possible, to convey a clear meaning of what is necessary to be known, either to be done or to be avoided, and without embarrassment from terms of art.

F I N I S.